On Bonaparte's passage through Chambery, he had been visibly affected by a shout from the multitude hailing him as the father of his soldiers. There were countless homes in France into which the letters of absent sons had sent the same epithet, and the nation at large thought of him in that role as a simple, benevolent man, devoted to his country and to her liberties. His histrionic talents, like his other gifts, were of the highest order, and for the moment this ideal must not be shattered. He therefore appeared to the French public as devoted to the principle of equality, which the Revolution considered the guarantee of free institutions. In the "Moniteur," the official journal of the time, may be read every detail of his conduct. Instead of waiting for visits from those in place, he made the advances. His clothes were plain, his manners were simple, his dignity was moderated to a proper respect for himself and others. The carriage in which he drove had but two horses, and there was no suite in attendance, either abroad or at home. Often the passers-by saw him walking alone in the small garden of his unostentatious dwelling, apparently resting from the fatigues of his campaigns. In short, there was nothing recognizable of the conquering potentate who had kept such state at Milan, except the affected simplicity of his personal life and conduct. "At first sight," wrote Talleyrand, whose acquaintance Bonaparte sought immediately on reaching Paris, "he struck me as a charming figure; the laurels of twenty victories are so becoming to youth, a handsome eye, a pale complexion, and a certain tired look."

There were a few proper assumptions of great dignity, as for instance when, on December tenth, 1797, a grand festival was celebrated in the classic style for the formal reception by the Directory of the treaty of Campo